

RUTGERS LITERARY MISCELLANY.

VOL. I.

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No. IV.

Original.

THE VOLUNTARY SYSTEM.

"HAVE you heard," said a young student addressing us the other day, "that the voluntary system has been introduced into the College at Cambridge, Massachusetts. What a delightful system that is—how tired I am of the Greek and Latin—I wish old Rutgers would follow the example." We replied to him that we had; and witnessed its introduction with much regret, as an innovation upon the old established principles of education, and one which we believed would not be attended with happy consequences. The young student however appeared perfectly delighted with the system and left us by saying, "one year's study of the Greek and Latin is enough; but to be kept at them for four years is a bad rule, and one which ought to be abolished in our Colleges."

We have no doubt that such a system would become quite popular among the students. To be allowed the privilege at the end of the freshman year, of choosing their own studies and deciding for themselves whether further to prosecute the study of the dead languages or abandon them altogether, would be quite gratifying, and one which the majority of students would eagerly embrace. The reason of this is perfectly obvious. The student at the end of the freshman year, has not yet acquired such a knowledge of the Greek and Latin, as to enable him to read the ancient authors with pleasure to himself, and he has not yet arrived at that age when he is capable of appreciating and admiring their beauties.

We must say that this voluntary system as adopted at Cambridge meets with our decided disapprobation, and deeply should we regret to see it introduced into our colleges. This system is based upon the presumption that the student at the close of the first year of his collegiate course is fully competent to decide what studies to adopt, and whether it is necessary for him to continue his classical pursuits, as being useful to him in the prosecution of his after occupation. This important point is left entirely to himself to decide. Now it does appear to us that he is utterly incompetent to settle so serious a question. Nor can he tell what bearing his classical learning will have upon his future destination in life. In fact he has not yet made choice of a profession. In order to determine whether he ought to pursue or abandon his classical studies, it is necessary that he should decide what is to be his future business or profession. Now we conceive that he is as incompetent to decide the one as the other of these questions. The students of the freshman class in the majority of our colleges are extremely youthful, and they cannot possibly tell what will be their future pursuit. Their facul-

ties are not yet sufficiently developed to enable either themselves or their parents to settle this point. We have known young men who in the early part of their collegiate course had resolved to follow a certain profession, but by the time they graduated, their minds had undergone a thorough change, conceiving that they were far better adapted for an entirely different one.

One of the most important epochs in the life of a student is the right choice of a profession, and how many there are who misjudge in this momentous matter. And yet according to this voluntary system, the young lad of fifteen or sixteen years of age is called upon to set his wits to work to make the suitable selection. And then after the choice is made he has still another question to decide, and one which we think far above his capacity, and that is, will a knowledge of the classics aid him in prosecuting his adopted profession. How can he tell whether it will be beneficial to the Lawyer, the Doctor or Divine? If he has selected as his future pursuit that of a merchant or mechanic, then perhaps he might come to the conclusion that a knowledge of the dead languages would not be very essential to him. But if his choice has fallen upon one of the learned professions, he is unquestionably inadequate to the task. He must be controlled in his decision entirely by the opinion and counsel of those who have gone before him. -

But it may be replied by the advocates of this voluntary system, that if the students themselves cannot decide this question, as to the necessity of their further prosecuting their classical studies, their parents can do it for them; they certainly are competent to the task. This does not follow by any means. How few of them have ever acquired a knowledge of the Greek and Latin language, and received a liberal education, so that they are in the majority of cases as incompetent judges as their children. They send their sons to college, for what purpose? To be instructed in those branches of learning, which are supposed to be requisite and necessary in forming the scholar.— They place full confidence in the ability and wisdom of the professors, as the proper judges of what the student should be taught. If they are not the right judges, who are?

If it is considered so important that the student should occupy his whole time in the acquisition of that knowledge alone, which is immediately connected with his later pursuits, we think that this voluntary system does not commence near early enough. The youth is permitted to spend two or three years in a Grammar School, and a year in college in learning the Greek and Latin languages, and then if he chooses, to abandon them altogether, as not having any connection, as he conceives, with his future business in life. Now we think that all this time might have been more properly employed, unless the student purposes to pursue one of the learned professions, or become a teacher of the dead languages, or is desirous of being a liberally educated and accomplished scholar. If he intends to enter upon some mercantile or mechanical line of business, perhaps he might as well have left the Greek and Latin alone. So it will be perceived that there is a radical defect in this voluntary system. It does not begin soon enough. It ought to commence when the youth is about to be placed in Grammar School. It should then be determined what is to be made of him; and those who have faith in phrenology with the view of aiding them in the solution of this question, ought to have the boy's caput well surveyed and his bumps critically and scientifically examined, to dis-

cover which way his talents lie. It then should be definitely settled whether the boy is to be a Lawyer, Doctor, Divine, Teacher, or the accomplished Scholar, before he is permitted to start upon his classical career.

This voluntary system we believe will have an injurious tendency. We have not the slightest doubt that the majority of students at the end of the freshman year, if permitted, would abandon studies which they look upon as dull and uninteresting, for others which they think more agreeable and useful, and which require less attention and industry to master. If compelled however to pursue their classical studies, by the time they graduate, if properly instructed, they will have acquired a sufficient knowledge to read the Greek and Latin authors with increasing pleasure and profit. They will then have reached that age when their mental faculties are ripening into those of manhood, and are becoming capable of appreciating the productions of the ancients, which, how few have been surpassed, or even equalled by the efforts of modern times. "Their morality," in the beautiful and eloquent language of another, "it is true, was superseded by the birth of our religion: and the state of society and manners, half described, half satirized, by Horace and Juvenal, exists no longer. But their systems of logic and philosophy are even now recovering from a temporary neglect, and furnishing materials for the speculations of our own day. And their oratory lives. It lives in the burning words of modern patriots and statesmen, who have spoken under the inspiration derived from the study of ancient models. It lives in all the triumphs obtained by men who have formed their taste and manner on the old examples, so that the eloquence of all modern times has been but one continuous and far resounding echo of the voices which spoke originally from the Athenian Pnyx and Roman Forum. And their poets, too—are their works dead? or is not rather their spirit to be found in the poetical literature of every nation, that rose from the wreck of the Roman empire? The words which were sung by a blind old rhapsodist, as he wandered about the isles and colonies of Greece, after giving form, expression,—ay, birth, to the whole literature, character, and national institutions of the people to whom he belonged, have come down to us through a period of three thousand years, during which time they have served as a theme for scholars, a model for poets, a study for all who could appreciate what was grand and beautiful in the efforts of human genius."

If our space permitted we should like to extend our remarks still further on this voluntary system, as it is called. We may recur to the subject again at some future time. In conclusion, we would observe that it behooves all scholars—those who have experienced the advantages to be derived from a classical education, and who adhere to the old time honored mode of instruction in our Colleges, to see that this new step which has been taken at Harvard University is not followed by other Seminaries of learning. It is in our opinion a most injudicious step, and one which we trust will soon be retracted by those who have made it.

A.

The heart often feels what the tongue cannot utter; and the tongue often utters what the heart cannot feel. The tongue should always be the servant of the heart—not the heart the servant of the tongue. If the tongue cannot utter all that the heart feels, the heart can, and should feel all that the tongue utters.

Original.

THE POET WARRIOR.

There sat beside the taper's flickering light
A bard,—of Briton's isle the pride. A child
Of genius, and a favourite of the muse.
Around him, pile on pile, lay massy tomes
Of ancient lore. From these he satisfied
The cravings of his giant mind, nor fear'd
He thus, by study and profound research,
To cripple genius in its lofty flights.
His eye was brilliant with unwonted fire,
As, with his head in pensive mood reclin'd
Upon his snowy hand, he sat and gazed
Upon the dying embers fading fast.
His candle, burning in its socket, shed
A feeble ray; and then the quivering flame,
Like the departing spirit lingering o'er
Its now-deserted clay, trembled around
The fast consuming wick, and then expired.
And why thus musing sits the poet, while
Sweet solitude her mantle o'er him flings,
And nought disturbs the reigning silence, save
The deep-toned midnight bell? Why lies his harp
Neglected and untun'd, and why that look
Of thoughtful sadness on his brow? Feels he
The pressing hand of want, the cheerless woes
Of poverty, the poet's lot? Meets he
The frown of an unfeeling world? Not these.
Though child of genius,—Fortune owned him too,
And scattered o'er him with a lavish hand,
Her favours. Wealth and proud nobility
Were his, and all that man could wish or crave
On Earth. But wealth, with all its glittering train,
Had nought to charm the poet's mind. He heard,
Borne on the wings of every gale, the groans
Of struggling liberty. From classic Greece
They came, and sadly on his list'ning ear
Fell, like the slow and solemn funeral knell
Of some departed friend. They touch'd a heart
Which long had burned with love for Greece. They woke
The tender sympathies, deep fix'd within
A breast where every generous feeling dwelt.
He felt for others' woes, and shed a tear

When others wept. And liberty, that name
 To every heart most dear, he loved; and Greece,
 The land of liberty, adored. He loved
 Her barren rocks, her templed hills, her streams
 In fable and in song renown'd. For he,
 Castalia's limpid fount had quaff'd, and climb'd
 Parnassus' steep, and with the sacred Nine
 Sweet converse held. And could he now behold
 That temple with unholy feet profaned
 Where Liberty had sat enshrined? And see
 The noble sons of fallen Greece enslaved
 By Moslem tyranny? It was too much
 For Byron's generous soul to bear. He cried,
 "While this right arm can wield a blade, for Greece
 It shall be raised. And while the purple stream
 Still courses through these veins, it shall be shed
 For her." Then, armed in freedom's holy cause,
 The poet warrior bade adieu to friends
 And home, and sped to rescue struggling Greece.
 Like a bright star, which 'mid the gathering clouds,
 Affords the mariner one ray of hope,
 Then sinks behind the bursting storm, so he
 Came but to inspire a transient hope, and die.
 The shout of joyful acclamation rang
 From Missolonghi through the Arcadian hills,
 And fill'd the hearts of Sparta's sons with joy
 And life. But ah! how soon insidious death
 Can blast the fairest hopes. With cruel hand
 He aim'd a fatal dart, and ere the shout
 That hail'd the welcome stranger died away,
 The dearest friend of Greece, and liberty,—
 The noble Byron fell! Far from his home,
 His native land, he breathed one ardent prayer
 That Heaven would crush the Moslem Turk, and free
 The Christian slave. And, while the victor Death
 Exulted o'er his falling prey, feebly
 The dying poet rais'd his trembling voice,—
 "My daughter! Greece!" he said, and then expired.

ISODORA.

It is not an unfrequent error, even with christians, to think that virtue is promoted, in proportion to the severity with which vice is condemned. But experience shows, that the most successful method of teaching men to hate what is wrong, is to induce them to love what is right. It is not sufficient to expose the deformity of vice—we must also unfold the charms of virtue. He that would control the conduct, must direct the will. The action cannot be right when the motive is wrong.

Original.

THE STUDENT'S MISCELLANIES.

BY A STUDENT.

READER, my intention is to give you a dissertation on Studies! In the ordinary sense of the word, a study is "An apartment devoted to literary employment," and in this sense I use it. But this is a very limited signification, arising from the vulgar notion that a Student is a man who shuts himself up in a roomfull of books. It is easy to conceive, how far this falls short of the true character of the student. I hold the student of the nineteenth century to be, *mutatis mutandis*, the representative of the old Philosopher—he is still, a *lover of wisdom*. Truth is the object of his search, the World is his study.

But as the mass of the student's knowledge is derived from books, he must have some quiet room to contain them, where without interruption, he can consult these silent friends, and compare his own observations with their experience; and this room he may well call, *par excellence*, his study.

I hate long descriptions, for they are always tedious. So I shall not say much about my study now. It is an old fashioned, irregular room, in an old fashioned house. It is over a wing, with two large dorman windows, one in front, the other in the rear; and a window in the gable end: so I am in no want of light. A huge chimney projects into the room making recesses on each side; the door opens into the main building. The front window looks on the road by which you approach the house; but a thick wood shuts up the prospect. Here I have my study books arranged; such as professional and grammars, and all others that refer to my duties; a curtain is arranged so as to shut up this recess, forming thus a little room, with one window. The dorman windows are about five feet deep, by four wide.

Here I can study, without anything to divert my mind. And to aid me I have written about on the wall, short sentences such as "Ye who enter here, leave sloth behind." "Nulla dies sine linea." "Perseverance conquers all things," &c. While maps, tables of paradigms and inflections hung on the wall give a very learned air to the compartment. Over this window on a little ledge stands the bust of Lord Bacon. I am obliged to adopt this plan of having separate compartments for my studies, and my lighter pursuits, or my volatile nature would be continually forcing me from one to another. But now making it a rule, to shut myself up so many hours daily in my *Den*, as I call this window, I manage to keep my mind fixed pretty steadily on my work. There is no view from the window to distract me, and no books of a more favorite kind to tempt me. None but the most sedate and solemn tomes are allowed entrance. Here Theology, Philosophy, Philology, and all the other *elogies*, hold grave and silent communion with their friends the Mathematics—*Procul o procul estis profani!*

There, you are tired, and I am tired. So I shall postpone the account of my workshops and of the rest of my study and its contents, to a more convenient time.

I was going to say these papers are not quite so aimless as they may appear, and

are meant for something more than mere trifling; but reflecting, that if the reader could not find this out from the papers themselves, he would not be likely to find it out at all, I concluded to let them pass for what they are worth, wishing my dear friends sufficient sagacity to discover in them stores of wisdom of which I myself never dreamed.

Original.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON READING. *+ Wm. H. H.*

THE maxim—show me the range of a person's reading and I will tell you his character—has often been quoted. This sentiment is undoubtedly just and exemplifies the importance of reading. As reading constitutes one of the most essential sources of knowledge, it may be an instrument of much good or evil. How necessary then, does it become, that it should be well directed, and followed out with judgement. But weighty as this consideration is, comparatively few seem to reflect upon it, and give it that degree of attention which it merits. Numbers spend their time either upon light and fictitious writings, or in an unsystematic and superficial perusal of sounder works. The evil, instead of growing less, appears rather to be increasing. A taste for light reading seems to be a prominent characteristic of our age. Could correct statistics be furnished, we would no doubt be astonished at the number of those who devote their hours to light and fictitious productions. The country is flooded with such publications—and their popularity and the avidity with which they are sought are sufficient proofs to verify our assertion. We are not of the number of those, who, with puritanical severity, would entirely banish fiction from the range of reading; we believe that a person will do himself no injury,—ay, even derive *benefit* from reading to a moderate extent a certain class of fictitious writings. But avoiding ultraism on the one hand we would not fall into the other extreme. It is that habitual light reading which we condemn,—that perverted taste, which takes no pleasure in the sound reflections of philosophical minds, in the discussions of morality, and in the instructive, enlightening narrative of history. This is the kind of reading which has become so prevalent, and which deserves all censure. How often do we find the student instead of devoting his leisure hours to useful reading, directing his attention only to the pernicious writings—or rather trash—of Bulwer and the like novelists, to the fascinating but poisoning verse of Byron, to the amorous songs of Moore, and to other productions of prostituted talent,—not to mention many effusions, which though unobjectionable as to their *moral* influence, still have an injurious tendency in other points of view, if habitually perused. The gay miss still in her 'teens', who, in the language of fashion has just finished her education, eagerly enquires after the latest novel, and pores over its flimsy page with an attention which would do credit to a better employment. No sooner is a novel manufactured in England, than, with all the speed of steamships it is sent across the ocean, republished here, perhaps in the form of some 'mammoth weekly,' and devoured with astonishing avidity.

If we look at our Magazines, we will find that the more popular are those which are almost exclusively made up of fiction and light reading. The publishers are aware that if they can only enlist the aid of distinguished novelists, and procure embellishments,

they are almost sure to succeed. And even if a magazine should contain one or more sound articles, ninety out of a hundred will perhaps pass over that article, to the lighter parts.

The natural consequence of this habitual light reading, is, to engender superficial habits of thinking, create a distaste for sound and useful reflections, and to instil in the mind false views of human nature. He who has not the moral courage to withdraw himself from the creations of fancy, will never be distinguished for depth of thought, and seldom for scientific research and profound investigation. He will always be liable to fritter away his energies on trifling objects, and if ever his attention be directed to an important and less obvious subject, he can neither summon resolution to persevere in his task, nor concentrate his powers in order to thoroughly investigate its first principles and various ramifications. Thus, he will be always likely to skim over the surface, and probably never be distinguished for the originality of his views. He who reads lightly, will generally think lightly, and be but a feebling in intellect.

But habitual light reading also creates a distaste for sound and useful reading, This we presume will not be denied. Almost every one must have felt, after perusing some light and fascinating production, a kind of aversion to pursue history or a philosophical treatise. This is natural; and it follows then that our taste must be well directed or it will become corrupted. We will not here consider other objections against light reading. Our limits oblige us to close, but we will pursue our suggestions in a future number.

Original.

THE PUBLIC PRESS.

THE Public Press is a mighty engine for good or for evil. Its influence in the direction and control of public sentiment is great. So much importance has been attached to it, that it has been remarked "that if Faustus were now living he might exclaim with all the enthusiasm of Archimedes and with a far nearer approach to the truth, give me where I may place a free press and I will shake the world." Since the art of printing has been brought to so high a state of perfection, and in consequence of the intercommunication of the mails with almost every section of the country, the people are addressed as it were at the same time. In perusing the histories of the ancient democracies, our astonishment is deeply excited at the great unlimited, and we were going to add, almost supernatural influence which their Orators exercised over the public mind. It is attributable however in a great measure to the fact, that on any important and exciting occasion, of common and universal interest, the whole people were convened in one mass. Those who addressed them, understood their feelings, their sentiments, their prejudices, and by a skilful management touched the cord which vibrated through the whole living mass, inciting to immediate action, and the accomplishment of the desired effect. The operations of the public press in this country, bear some similitude in this respect to the influence exerted by the ancient orators. It speaks to the whole American people as if collected on one spot and in one body. Its potential voice is heard sweeping along "the shores to the mountains, from the regions of

frost to the valleys of eternal spring. The importance to be attached to the manner in which the public press in this country is conducted, cannot be too highly estimated.—The blessings which it is calculated to produce are great, but the evils which inevitably ensue from its improper management are equally so. The true patriot, the real lover of his country, will exert his best and unremitting efforts for the promotion of the former, and the prevention of the latter. Let a high sense of public virtue and morality, let a high toned public sentiment require at the hands of those who conduct the press, that it shall not be made the medium for detraction and falsehood, but that of truth, pure and unadulterated. Let it speak boldly—independently, but truly,—let it expose vice in all its hideous forms,—let it hold up to public scorn and execration the man who would dare to lay his sacrilegious hand upon the ark of our political safety, but let the character of our pure and good men, (and we trust there are such among us,) go untarnished by personal abuse and calumny. To abuse an adversary, to impeach his motives, and assail his character, instead of fairly and honestly discussing his merits, and meeting his arguments, is too common a fault among us. Let a check be placed upon the excessive license of the freedom of the press, by discountenancing any thing like falsehood, calumny and abuse. Let the public press, this fountain from which should issue pure and healthy streams, be preserved from becoming corrupt, polluted, and dangerous.

A.

Original.

THE EXILE'S DREAM.

BY MRS. M. ST. LEON LOUD.

TWENTY years passed over my head and I was still an exile from my native land. My once black and shining locks were becoming silvered with the frosts of time; my step was no longer firm and elastic, and I felt that the hopes I never wholly relinquished of once more revisiting the home of my childhood, were fast fading away. That hope had been the solitary star of my long and weary banishment—a thirsty, unquenchable desire by day—a burning, haunting memory in the dream of night. But the tyrant by whose unjust sentence I had been made a wanderer, still lived, and while I prayed that I might “die among my kindred,” I began to fear that my prayer would not be granted. I left my solitary cottage and sought the river’s bank, where often in mingling my tears with its sparkling waters, I had drawn consolation from the idea that they at least might lave the green margin of my native lawn. After walking till I was weary, seeking in vain to escape from the agonies of “hope deferred,” I seated myself on the gnarled roof of an old weather-beaten tree, and gave way to bitter tears. “Oh!” I exclaimed, “could I but for one moment stand on the brow of the hill, at the foot of which lies the valley where I was born, and where my kindred dwell, and gaze once more on its quiet beauty, I would be satisfied.”

A long, low sigh sounded through the boughs of the old tree, and a form of unearthly beauty stood before me. Her face was as radiant as an angel’s, yet as she looked upon me, a shade of touching and inexpressible sadness stole over it, and her voice thrilled to my heart as she spoke. “Poor, unhappy mortal! The ear of the Holy One is wearied with thy repinings; thy wish shall be granted—I am commissioned to convey thee to

the spot thou hast mentioned—close thine eyes." She took my hand and raised me from the ground—a feeling as of rapid flight pass'd over me—our journey was ended. It was a warm, bright day in early autumn, and as the mists rose slowly to the mountain tops and were dispersed by the rays of the sun, my native valley lay like a beautiful picture before my eyes. My first impulse was to rush down to the house; but a powerful influence restrained me. So severe was the disappointment, that my eyes were blinded by tears, and for a time I could observe nothing. At last I became composed and looked about me, but wherever I turned my gaze it rested on the melancholy evidences of change. The scene had dwelt in my memory as I left it twenty years before—the neat, low cottages with their vine covered porches—the rustic mill, the low wooden bridge spanning the stream, whose banks were fringed with flowering alders—the little church surrounded by graceful poplars—where were they now? Gaudy brick edifices occupied the road side, their bare red walls glowing in the sunlight as if heated within; the mill had fallen to decay, its pleasant clacking voice had ceased, and a little higher up the stream stood a huge stone building, from whence issued sharp, horrid noises, accompanied by quick, impatient puffs of vapour. But the church—that spot linked with all my holiest associations, had undergone the most sorrowful change. The poplars, the pride of the valley, were gone; and in place of the simple mossy mounds which marked the resting place of the "forefathers of the hamlet," cold white slabs of marble gleamed like the faces of the dead below. I dwelt thus minutely on the remoter parts of the picture, reluctant to approach what more nearly concerned me—my own home. There had been no march of improvement—slowly but surely had time done its work. The storms of twenty years had changed the pristine whiteness of its walls to a dark, grey colour. The honeysuckles, instead of gracing the porch, trailed feebly along the ground; the garden gate swung loosely on one hinge, and a few pale autumn flowers alone were left "to show where a garden had been." While I gazed with bursting heart on all I had so panted to behold, I said, "Surely my parents and my brothers and sisters are still there. Oh! let me look upon them also." At that moment an aged man came forth leaning on a staff. His form was bent, his step slow and faltering, and he soon sat down wearily on a wooden seat near the door which I had myself constructed when a boy. Vacantly his faded eyes wandered over the familiar objects around him, while with childish satisfaction he basked in the warm sunshine. He was followed by a female in deep mourning, and soon after a man joined them in the dress of a soldier, but soiled and worn. He had lost an arm, and his face was scarred with deep wounds. "Tell me," I cried to the being who stood motionless by my side, "tell me—who are these?" Tears fell from her eyes as she replied: "That white haired man is thy father, his second childhood has nearly closed. The female is thy youngest and favorite sister, once the pride and life of the valley—widowed and childless she returned to soothe the last hours of her parent. Behold in that mutilated and war-worn man thy brother—the only one living—the aspirant for glory and the partaker of her rewards." A faintness as of death came over me. "One more—there is one more—the star of my existence—my mother! tell me—." I could not finish the question—I turned my eyes on her who alone could answer it. The beauty of a glorified spirit irradiated her countenance; she looked towards me with a smile of ineffable sweetness, and the resemblance to her who had watched over my childhood was complete. "Mother!" I

cried, and stretched forth my arms to embrace her. The effort awoke me, and I found I had been dreaming. All was silent and lonely, for night had settled down noiselessly on my slumbers. The stars above were shining in their quiet beauty, but their reflection in the restless stream was broken into a thousand sparkles, like the hopes of man, bright and glorious in their birth, but dashed aside and destroyed ere they reach their fulfilment. In that still hour my soul learned a lesson of wisdom, to be content with my lot, and in humble submission to His will who orders all things aright, await the final change which cometh to all men. And though my days on earth must be spent in solitary exile, I am ready to acknowledge that "it is good for me to be here." Henceforth my home is in the skies where change is unknown—there dwell my mother and my kindred, and there the captive and the exile shall be free forever.

Philadelphia, March 1842.

Original.

THE STRANGER'S GRAVE.

MANY years since, a sloop sailing up the Hudson river, anchored off in the stream about two miles below the village of Poughkeepsie. From the stern of the vessel a boat was lowered, and drawn alongside. A coffin of rough boards was placed in it, and two men rowed the boat in silence to the shore. A grave was hastily dug—the coffin placed therein, and a few shovels full of dirt covered from human sight the coffin, and the dust of mortality it contained. All that was ever learned of the fate and history of the dead was—his name,—that he had just emigrated to this country,—was on his way to the far west, and had died suddenly on board the vessel of a contagious fever.

The following thoughts were suggested by a recent visit to 'the Stranger's Grave'—finding the tomb stone broken down, the inscription defaced, and scarce a vestige remaining to mark the spot where his ashes were laid.

"Sleep, stranger sleep, the deep low wind is singing
Its dirge-like song above thy lonely bed;
Sleep, stranger sleep, pale forest flowers are springing,
To droop like mourners o'er thy clay cold bed."

Fond memory recalls my youthful years,
And retrospection's page presents to view
The scenes of other days.

Well I retrace

The happy time, when first my wand'ring feet
Intruding—stepp'd upon this hallowed ground—
The stranger's resting place.

I had strayed

Far from the lov'd companions of my youth,
Near where the waters dash the sandy shore,
Lost in sad musings and delicious dreams.
The sun's departing rays reflected back

Hill, tree, and shrub, all bathed in living green,—
 On the bright bosom of the mirrored stream.
 Nature had drawn her robe of silence round,
 And nought disturb'd the stillness of the scene
 Save but the murmuring rivulet, that glided
 Swiftly onward o'er its pebbled bed, till
 Far away it mingled with the deep blue sea.
 My course was stay'd—I paus'd, and lo! I stood
 Beside the stranger's grave.

Well I remember

With what awe and reverence too, I read
 The epitaph engraved upon the slab,
 That marked the resting place, so lone and strange,
 Of the forsaken and forgotten one.
 And here, although so young, I dropped a tear
 To the neglected memory of him
 Who, from fond home and kindred friends afar,
 A stranger in a new and foreign clime,
 Rested—to bide the audit of his God.
 Time in his hurrying, noiseless pace,
 Passed on. Swift and unheeded years flew by:
 Again I stood beside the stranger's grave,—
 But Oh! how changed was now his resting place.
 What sacrilegious hand could thus defile
 The sanctuary of the dead? Behold!
 The fragments of yon stone lay scatter'd
 All around—the stranger's name defac'd,
 And all that mark'd his grave destroyed.
 Could not thy ashes rest in peace, lone one?
 Must the rude stone that told thy hist'ry brief
 Be marred—and thy lone grave forgotten be?
 I fain would learn the story of thy life,
 And draw aside the dark mysterious veil
 That shrouds it from our mortal vision now.
 But oh! it cannot be! Eternity
 Alone can tell the secrets of the dead.

Poughkeepsie, March 1842.

A. J. K.

Near the surface of the earth, the atmosphere is charged with vapor, so that vision is never clear nor health perfect; but at a little distance above the earth, the air is always pure and exhilarating. So it is with those affections that are confined to earth; their vision is dim, and their health impaired, while those affections which soar above the world are pure and healthful.

Original.
SKETCHES.

BY PAUL PRY, JR.

READER, you have undoubtedly heard of the renowned Paul Pry. It is impossible that such a great man could have lived unknown to the world, or died without leaving a lasting fame behind. Perhaps you have heard that he was an old gingerbread pedlar. Well, so he was. He possessed a very large corporal existence, and within it a generous, magnanimous soul. He often fed the hungry from his basket, and never disregarded the calls of starving humanity. And when some saucy urchin, with stealthy foot, crept up behind the old man, and appropriated to himself a goodly piece of gingerbread, and ran off *unobserved*, the kind hearted pedlar never attempted to pursue the little thief, but allowed him quietly to enjoy his plunder. But Paul Pry was something more than a dispenser of the necessities of life: he was a philosopher of the highest order of genius. The science of Astronomy, in particular, has been greatly enriched and promoted by his valuable discoveries. By the aid of his telescope he has pierced through the veil that confines our weak vision to this mundane sphere, and exhibited to our astonished gaze the wonders of celestial regions. His almanacs, too, have been in marvellous demand; and our good old grandmothers, who have been accustomed from time to us immemorial, to plan their future visits by reference to the prophetic part of Paul Pry's almanac, solemnly declare that his predictions concerning the weather have in all cases proved strictly and literally true, except when some Providential cause interfered, over which it was impossible for any philosopher to have the least control.

But we have said enough about this great and good old man; he needs no eulogy, for his fame is co-extensive with the spread of learning and science. There is however in man a natural propensity to speak of his ancestors, especially if, like certain species of the vegetable kingdom, the best part be under the ground; and it would be strange indeed were we not afflicted with a weakness so common to human nature. But you will not wonder, reader, that we so freely indulge this propensity at present, when you are informed that we are about to introduce ourself:—and here we are with a bow and a scrape, your humble servant, Paul Pry, Jr.

And now perhaps you will wish to know something about your new acquaintance. When a traveller sets out upon his journey he feels a desire to know who are to be his companions. So it is with the reader. He is immediately anxious to have some acquaintance with his author's character and peculiarities. He wishes to know whether he is black or white, or a little *green*, and asks—

"Are you handsome or ugly? in youth or in age?"

Man, woman, or child? a fool or a sage?"

Now this is a laudable curiosity, but, dear reader, I must beg to be excused from satisfying you in this instance, for I am such a "*sui generis*" that it would be impossible to describe myself if I would, and I had rather not if I were able. It is enough to say, that I am a descendant of the renowned Paul Pry, and though not yet crowned with his laurels, no man can tell where he may arrive when he launches his frail barque upon the wide ocean. My ruling passion is inquisitiveness. From this remarkable charac-

teristic, our great ancestor, like many heroes of antiquity, received his name; and it is not a little remarkable that Mr. Knickerbocker, in his famous history of New York, has not immortalized the name of Pry, when he might have done so with a few dashes of his pen. However, it will be immortal in the records of Astronomical science. While all the knowledge our family has ever possessed has been acquired by this disposition of prying, it has notwithstanding been the source of much misery and reproach. We have been sneered at, and scorned for prying into the affairs of others. But the knowing part of mankind are in our favor; they say we have been unjustly condemned, and it is true. How can a man grow wise if he stays at home and attends to his own business? Let me tell you in confidence, reader, that if you wish to acquire a fund of general knowledge, you must see what others are doing. You must peep into your neighbor's kitchen and pantry; you must learn the secrets of all who will trust you; but when you get them do not be so selfish as to keep them all yourself; knowledge should be common property, therefore disclose all your friends' secrets to every one you meet, but be sure to charge each one never to tell them again—no not for the world.

But patient reader, pardon this digression; we will in future endeavor to have our thoughts more connected and coherent. We have shown too much familiarity; we plead a formal introduction with all its accompaniments, which in these days of modern etiquette, though a *sine qua non* in forming acquaintance, is nevertheless a sufficient foundation for the most intimate friendship.

WIRT'S ORATION.

[We present to our readers this month an extract from a letter written by a lady of this city, to the editor of the National Intelligencer, just after the distinguished orator, William Wirt, delivered his unequalled address before the Literary Societies of our institution. The address has been translated into several different languages, and read with the deepest interest; and we know, that those who have ever heard Mr. Wirt speak, will not deem the description extravagant, much less those who listened to him then. Truly, he being dead, yet speaketh.—Ed.]

"I have no language to express the effect produced on my mind by Mr. Wirt's oration. The manner, style, sentiments, eloquence, were all so peculiar—so different from any thing I had ever heard before, that I scarcely know how to describe my feelings. You know his appearance, and how well it is calculated to call forth admiration, and conciliate regard. Before he uttered a word, I was prepossessed in his favor; and when he spoke, his first sentence won the heart. There was something so delicate, so veiled, in the modesty of his apology—such an appearance of truth, yet so much refinement—that like the dew of mist to the landscape, his talents became more admirable by the shade he threw over them.

"I cannot attempt an analysis of the address. It will doubtless be published; you will then judge of the excellent sense, the sound maxims of life, drawn, as he said, from his own experience; the beauty of his classic allusions, the variety of his topics, the lucidness of his arguments. But the grace of his manner—the rich and mellow intonations of his voice, not even your imagination can supply. It was the highest burst of eloquence I ever enjoyed.

"Notwithstanding the heat and the crowd, I listened nearly two hours with unwearied and unabated interest, only dreading, at every pause, that he was coming too soon to a close—that the charm of his eloquence was to be dissolved. His last sentence completed the captivation commenced by the first; and when he ceased to speak, there was a silence of many seconds throughout the whole audience, as if they were spell bound. Such an effect I never before witnessed; similar to the feeling produced by fine music, when the suspended sense seems to linger on the departed sounds.

"What a magic is there in eloquence! How I wish he was in the pulpit, and these noble talents consecrated to the noblest cause. But it is possible, nay probable, that his admonitions may come with more power to the hearts of his audience, than they would from a preacher or a professor. To hear a man of the world, who knew what the world *could give*, pronounce it wholly insufficient to fill the heart, and recommending religion as the only solid good, must carry conviction to the youthful mind."

READER—

We have just had a rich, intellectual banquet. We said, we had just had it, and we told the truth; and under its exhilarating influence, we would fain spread it before you, and tell you to enjoy it to your heart's content. And then such a company of ladies, distinguished, not for mere beauty, but for something far nobler—the fire of genius, lighting up each countenance with glorious, imperishable thought. It was the most perfect representation of female loveliness, combined with intelligence and energy of thought, that we have ever seen, and we felt proud that we could call them the daughters of our free and happy land. We will introduce them. First came Mrs. Sigourney, with her smile of benevolence and love; and you should have seen the rapt attention with which we listened to the life-giving language, in describing 'The Village Funeral.' She led us—for she leads one wherever she will—beside an open grave, where stood a coffin, over which a little lad was bending, in all the eloquence of grief, sole mourner for the dead—for it was his mother—his only earthly friend. He was persuaded to see his mother's Savior—and then, was soon lain beside her, and his released spirit went to join her in the skies. We wept over the recital, and would have said, Mrs. Sigourney, tell us more. The next was Miss Sedgwick, with whom we have been delighted to follow Eliott Lee—Herbert Linwood, and his sister Isabella, through their noble, patriotic acts, and companionship with our immortal Washington;—and in her journeyings through England—along the valley of the Rhine—in Switzerland, and then gazed with enthusiasm upon the towering Alps, and vindicated, with her, the character of the Italians. She now related to us an interesting account of the 'Investments of Wilton Marvy' and promised to finish the account at some future time—when we hope you will accompany us to hear it. Mrs. Lee Hentz you have long admired, and would have been pleased with her description of Aunt Mercy. You should have heard Miss Leslie tell about 'The Beana.' She is present at every entertainment, and will tell us some more, at the next meeting—which will be a rare treat. Who is more agreeable than Mrs. Beecher Stowe in her description of 'The Tea Rose.' Then, there was Mrs. Embury, whom you have declared one of the most delightful of companions; and many others, but we must let you go and see for yourself the other ladies, and N. P. Willis, whose pencilings by the way, and numerous other sketches, you remember—Dr. Mackenzie

of England—Mr. T. S. Arthur, one of the most instructive of writers. Then we saw the Vicar of Wakefield, when Livy returned, reproving his Lady for not receiving her daughter—and Sophia pleading for her. How venerable he looked! It was beautiful! There was lovely Anne Page too, inviting Slender to the dinner—from our old friend William Shakespeare. Are you not charmed, reader? Well! you can go yourself, and have as good a feast every month for three dollars a year. *That banquet is Godley's Lady's Book, and these ladies and gentlemen, the distinguished contributors. Give your name to the Editors, and then send us word, if we have told you any thing but the truth.*

EDITOR'S TABLE.

So the time has come to spread our *table* once more. Approach then, readers, one and all, and surround our humble board. With pleasure we bring our monthly tribute, though, like the good old dames sometimes say to their company, we wish we had something better to set before you. We hope, however, that when the earth has become thoroughly warmed by the genial influences of Spring, and has spread her carpet of green, and decked her hair with vernal blossoms; when the fragrant odors of Nature's perfumery are wafted by the gentle zephyrs to our delighted senses, and when the potatoes begin to sprout and the cabbages to head, our own prolific brains will also become so rarified and vivified and fructified by sympathy as to produce abundantly, and enable us to serve our readers with dishes of a more agreeable variety, and by way of *dissertations* to offer them the ripe golden fruit with our usual compliment of *leaves*.

But the first of April is here, and we must not let her pass without a poetical address.

Hail, balmy April, with thy budding flowers,
Thy smiling sun and sweet refreshing showers;
Hail to thee, with thy gentle zephyrs cool,
Hail to——, but hark! she answers, "April fool."

Verily, Spring is the time for the muses to venture abroad, but we guess this time that Thalia's mother does not know she's out.

What a fickle month is April: fit emblem of life with all its ever varying scenes. An April-morning dawns bright and beautiful. The dew drops sparkle in the sunbeams, like gems of the purest crystal. But soon some jealous cloud obtrudes herself before the chariot of the king of day, lest dame Earth should receive all his benignant smiles, until melted by the earth's sad countenance, into tears of contrition she pours them out in April showers. Thus it is with human life. Hope animates the heart and beams in the face of giddy youth. A bright prospect lies open before him, but before the meridian of life arrives, this prospect is darkened by clouds of adversity, which ere he is aware, discharge their fury in storms upon his head. And now, gentle reader, by your permission we will close with a short piece of advice. Never attempt to encounter the ills of life without arming yourself with fortitude, nor start upon an hour's walk on a sunny afternoon in April without an umbrella.

Our sincerest thanks are due to Mrs. Gardiner, and Mrs. St. Leon Loud, for the interest they take in our publication, as also to our other correspondents who have loaned us their valuable aid. Such favors we cannot easily forget.